

>> KATE BRADY: Welcome, folks. This is Kate Brady, Chair of the Georgia Statewide Rehabilitation Council, and we are glad that you are listening to our overview of a GVRA client services procedure change.

What we're up to today is providing an overview and an invitation for Public Comment regarding support for students who chosen Inclusive post-secondary education in order to reach their competitive employment goal. We'll be joined by Dr. Christine Fleming, the vocational services Director, Susan Kizer, who's the VR IPSE Coordinator and Susanna Miller-Raines, who's the GAIPSEC statewide Coordinator.

And as I said, I'm Kate Brady. I'm Chair of the Statewide Rehabilitation Council, as well as the Deputy Director at the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I'll turn it over to Susanna.

>> SUSANNA MILLER-RAINES: Hi, my name is Susanna Miller-Raines. I work at the center for leadership in disability at Georgia State University. We're one of Georgia's two universities centers of excellence in Developmental Disabilities. One of the key projects that I work on is the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium, and I'm going to talk a little bit about what we have going on here in Georgia as it relates to inclusive post-secondary Ed.

So just a little information. An inclusive post-secondary Ed program is for students with intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Some of the programs are four year programs and then others are two year programs. Some programs are residential and then others are commuter campuses. The students typically take classes for audit but in some cases they're able to take credit classes and that's just because they have not been able to matriculate like traditional college students because of their diploma or the tests that one might take to be able to receive credit in a four-year or a two-year program.

All the programs involve mentoring, and because they are employment focused, students are taking and doing internships, doing some work study, and also they're learning independent living skills, as well. And it's really important that we look at these principles of inclusive post-secondary ed, which set these programs aside from other types of programs. So the programs are inclusive. This means the students are fully included in the life of the university.

The programs are academic, and that means that the students are taking classes, and there is satisfactory academic progress that is being measured while they're in their classes. So they are expected to have learning goals, just as their other peers have, and they're also graded and given a grade in their classes, even though it is an audit class.

The program, they're accommodating, so students are getting what they need to be able to fully participate, so whatever kind of acquisition accommodations they need for inside and outside class performance they're receiving those. They're employment focused, like I said earlier, and the programs are evaluated, and there are several different ways they're evaluated and we work as a team with the inclusive post-secondary ed consortium here in Georgia to ensure these programs are programs that are doing what they're supposed to be doing.

So comprehensive transition program, and it's what we throw around as a CTP, this is a federal designation from the U.S. Department of Education office of special -- no, office of financial aid, and through the higher education opportunity Act this is legislation that emphasizes participation in inclusive college courses and internships and requires the students be socially and academically integrated to the maximum extent possible. So there are lots of guidelines that schools have to follow in order to receive this designation and they're designed for post-secondary students with intellectual disabilities to continue academic, career, and technical and independent living instruction in order to prepare for employment. So inclusive post-secondary ed programs provide information to the U.S. department of ed on their programs, on Saturdays on academic progress, and they put in about a 30 or 40-page application in order to be approved as a CTP so it's a very rigorous process and in

order to receive your CTP, you have to show different benchmarks and if a school gets their CTP, the students are then able to receive Pell Grants and federal work study funds and this is the only designation offered right now for inclusive post-secondary ed programs.

So we have 9 inclusive post-secondary ed programs in Georgia. We have Project WOLVES at the university of West Georgia. There's Destination Dawgs at the University of Georgia. There's the EXCEL program at Georgia Tech. There's the Academy for Inclusive Learning & Social Growth at Kennesaw State University. There's the IDEALS program at Georgia State University. There's the CHOICE program at East Georgia State College. There's eagle Academy at Georgia Southern university. There's the LEAP program at Albany Technical College and the GOALS program at Columbus State. We're also working with several other colleges here in Georgia to open their programs and it looks like Georgia College and State University will be the next program to - in the next year.

>> SUSAN KIZER: So what kind of students go to these inclusive post-secondary education program? It is best for students who were on an IEP during high school. They had a 504 plan, they graduated with a general diploma or similar other type of documentation of completion. They were most likely not the students who took two years of foreign language. They may not have taken the ACT or the SAT. They were usually taught in small groups or it could have been a co-taught class, and these are students who are not going to be able to gain acceptance as typical matriculating students. They will be auditing courses to broaden their knowledge. They want an experienced life on a college campus and the final thing is they want a better job

The next couple of slides are going to be done by Dr. Christine Fleming, she's our Vocational Rehabilitation Director and then me. I am Sue Kizer. I am the IPSE Coordinator. I did 30 years of teaching and then I went on to Kennesaw State University in the IPSE program and I was there for about 5 years and then I came to GVRA so I think I have a good understanding of what an IPSE program is.

So the current typical process, where we are, GVRA's policy to support IPSE programs began around 2015. I was an academic Adviser. We were pretty excited about this. We had about 20 students in our program and any financial support was greatly appreciated. One issue was that many of our students didn't understand the process they needed to go through to become a VR client. The student heard about the program, they applied to the program and if they were accepted, they began to apply to be a VR client. As I have learned, this is not a quick process. The Counselors need to justify the student attending the program and to write an IEP or a work plan which includes participation in the post-secondary program. Students must also complete the FAFSA. The Counselor had to determine if the cost was reasonable, appropriate, and necessary.

>> CHRISTINE FLEMING: Hi, this is Christine, and so Sue and I will be going back and forth in this Section kind of talking about what is currently going on with IPSE programs and its collaboration with GVRA, and kind of where we're headed, so I know Sue talked about the current system being in place since about 2015, but GVRA has actually been partnering with the IPSE program since about 2008 so we've had this historical relationship where the VR Counselors would work with the programs to figure out what was needed by the students and so what we're finding now, over time, the demands from the programs for funding really has exceeded VR's capacity to keep meeting those needs, partly because we found that a lot of the students needed more services than just those services provided by the IPSE program, and so not only was VR funding needed to support the students' participation while on the college campus, but they were also needing us to fund part of their -- the Employment Services that they needed in order to get a job, whether it was job development, Discovery, supported employment, ongoing job supports, so we really had to find a way to manage the cost to VR in a way that best meet the needs of the student. We didn't want to spend all the funding we had available up front if we weren't then able to provide the funding that the students needed in order to achieve their employment goals.

So we really had to look at our fee schedule, and kind of manage expectations by the families and the schools in order to make sure that our services fit within the federal guidelines, but also that we had sufficient funding to cover all of the support services that students might need in order to achieve their employment goal. And so that caused us to kind of step back and really kind of look more clearly and more closely at what the IPSE programs were all about, and how they fit into the rehab process, as a service that clients needed in order to achieve their employment goals.

So one of the things that we looked at is with the IPSE programs, what they're really providing is Pre-Employment Development type classes and addressing both the academic, social, and vocational supports on a college campus so we really looked at this service as pre-employment training program in order to help the person prepare for a competitive, integrated employment so we tried to kind of look at what that as fees would make sense and because the inclusive post-secondary education programs during those first two years really aren't addressing measurable skill, grant or credential it's the preparation of the pre-employment skills development. While aerial what Sue and I are talking about today has to do with what we're looking at for the first two years of the IPSE participation which is really addressing those pre-employment skills development, and then over the next year, Sue and I will be busy working with Susanna and the programs to really define those employment skills that would be developed those second two years and for some students it may be their second year the schools are really addressing some of those employment skills so for some students, they may be looking at those type of skills development.

So in trying to define what the part, the components that VR pays for, it's really looking at limiting it to the four semesters, so the Spring and the Fall for each student for two years of really focusing on those pre-employment skills, and really looking at so that the subsequent years will be more of those employment skills development, but obviously because VR is individually based determination, some students may not need additional pre-employment skills that second, third, and fourth year so that they quickly switch over to employment skills training, but while they're doing the pre-employment skills development those first two years, we're looking at a customary rate of \$3,000 per semester. If a student needs additional supports, needs additional services, they would -- could still be requested with the Counselor working with their supervisor to get that approved so that based on the needs of the student would determine what additional services were easily justified.

[Sound of fireworks]

I added this slide because in trying to look at what IPSE needed to look like with regards to how VR functioned, trying to make the IPSE programs -- let me reverse my sentence -- trying to get VR to kind of fit the way IPSE programs were structured didn't really work so we've tried to do, Sue and I working with the consortium, working with the IPSE programs directly of trying to figure out how could we position the programs to be more fitting with how we operate rather than trying to get the other way around? Because it just wasn't working. Counselors were slow to make decisions because there was no measurable skill gain. There was no recognized credential. Those things do exist from the school's perspective but looking at the federal regulations, we couldn't figure out which measurable skill was being developed during this first two years and so it really made more sense to kind of step back and kind of re-look at what the programs were offering to the students to be sure that we were addressing what the students needed.

So therefore that's what we kind of looked at, looking at ways to kind of reinterpret how we're applying the service, and I said oops because I'm in charge of the slide moving forward and I moved it too soon because now Sue is up.

>> SUSAN KIZER: I'm up. Okay. Introducing the new comprehensive service strategy. This is a strategy that was designed to make the process more streamlined with positive employment results. So this is how we got it to go. So the student is in high school. The student becomes familiar with the post-secondary programs during their Pre-ETS classes. And the student expresses an interest in the post-secondary options. And he has a Counselor that comes, a VR Counselor, that attends his junior year IEP, and the student lets them know that he's interested in a particular program. The student initiates the process to be determined if they qualify to be a VR client. And the VR Counselor presents him with informed choices. And then during the senior year, the VR Counselor attends his final IEP, and they begin the IEP -- IPE development with students and then this particular student goes through a Discovery process or some kind of vocational process to identify the goal, and identify the need and services with the student. And then they both sign the plan. Everybody's in agreement. So then, the student is attending the IPSE program. The student - - Discovery identifies the work goals that align with the inclusive post-secondary education, and they choose which program would best serve their employment needs. And then during the program, classes are incorporated, pre-employment classes are incorporated, into the classroom, and they identify the services needed after graduation to achieve the IPE. When I say "they," I'm talking about the VR Counselor, I'm talking about the person in the program who may be called an academic Adviser, they're all different and then the student and they sit down and discuss what am I going to need after graduation? After they see what's needed they identify a qualified provider

during the final semester for transition planning who can best assist that person reach those goals and that expectation.

Uh-oh.

>> CHRISTINE FLEMING: Did I skip one?

>> SUSAN KIZER: No I think you got it. Next one.

>> CHRISTINE FLEMING: So the next one is mine. We just kind of wanted to make sure that because there's a lot of different programs that are out there that we're really only talking about those programs that fall under the CTP category so the student must be enrolled in the CTP. The program identified is on his or her individual plan for employment and the services outlined is necessary to achieve their employment goal and that the services are provided by the CTP or to the pre-employment skills are provided by the CTP. The student may still be attending academic classes but the services that VR is funding has to do with what the CTP is providing. We're also making sure that the services are provided in an integrated setting. We really like the idea that the students will be able to be on a college campus to get those pre-employment transition skills. That way, they're still there with their typical peers and so the services are delivered on a college campus so it's a great way to kind of get that opportunity and then the students continue to make satisfactory progress.

>> SUSAN KIZER: I believe this is mine. Many of the programs offer classes in the area of social skills, independent skills, self-advocacy, and career development. They may have several lessons on how to deal with rude customers, what is an appropriate response, what do I do if I'm late to work? How do I manage my time? How do I handle a relationship with a co-worker? You'd be surprised the questions that come out once the students have been there for a while and they're used to all their peers around them.

And they also, one thing that I really liked was they learned the use of public transportation. Some of our students learned how to use MARTA, and how to use Uber, and all those things, so they could get to their internships.

Okay, so what is the IPSE program responsible for? The academic advisers, or whatever they're going to call those people, will go through the courses that the student may be interested in. They want to find that course that matches the student's goal. They also work with the students to advocate for themselves through the person-centered planning, a very important process, and principles of self-determination. The Adviser also works with the student during the unpaid work experience. They're going to assess the student on how they're doing at their internship. They're going to talk about what their strengths are, what their weaknesses, what they need to work on. They may also go out and find jobs that are on campus or off-campus, and then later on, they're going to coordinate with the VR Counselor to link to appropriate service provider as they transition out of the IPSE program.

They also are responsible for educating the work sites about the natural supports and disability etiquette, and accommodations and what accommodations are necessary. One thing I want to go back and discuss is, when they decide on a class that is appropriate for the student, is going to help him achieve his work goals, they meet with the professors to make sure the professors understand what their program is about, and make them understand that accommodations are going to be made by the IPSE program person. And also, a very important thing, Susanna talked about satisfactory academic progress. They're going to provide semester end progress report regarding the student's development and skills for competitive integrated employment goal and that's what we're all about.

So here is a sample of a day in the life of a student attending an inclusive post-secondary program. As you see, they may be taking Monday and Wednesday, they're taking human communications class, and that is the audit class. Then later on, they may have on Monday you see in green you see 10:30 to 11:30 a life skills class. That's where you're going to learn about self-advocacy, how to handle time management, all those life skills that they need in order to be successful. Then they may have a study session for an hour. Then they may have another class, technology, where they learn how to do résumés. And then they have, one thing I wanted to mention is most of the programs have a mentor.

This particular student has Kendall and Scott for their mentors, and these mentors go to the classes with the student, and help them navigate the class.

Also, they're there for social events. The mentor may help them go to a basketball game or a football game. They're just kind of like their safety net to make sure everything is going okay. And as you see here, there are some empty spaces, but understand that any college student is going to have some down time, and this is where the student learns to handle the down time.

>> CHRISTINE FLEMING: I know this is a lot of information to process for those of you that are picking this up to watch it, so when we worked on this PowerPoint, it was just to try to get everybody an idea of what the IPSE programs do. VR is not changing what the IPSE programs do. We did the same presentation for our own staff trying to make sure that everybody was on the same page about what to expect, whether you're the student wanting to get into the IPSE program, whether you're a Counselor trying to determine if an IPSE program makes sense for one of your clients but really trying to get everybody on the same page so we all know what we're working towards so the students and VR Counselor can work together to figure out what is best for the student, and that way the student can self-advocate, as well as use the skills development that's being offered now on the college campus to help them reach their employment goals and some of that is taking that time when you're a college student to figure out what it is you want to do. Most college students change majors oftentimes and I would imagine that the students who decide to participate in an IPSE program on a college campus will also change their employment goal, because they're getting an opportunity to see different things and to learn more about jobs that they're interested in that they didn't know about before they went to college, just like all college students have that experience. We're also trying to set it up so that the VR Counselor really isn't trying to pin the student down at high school what their career goal is going to be in order to approve participation in the IPSE program but really using the IPSE program to help the Counselor as well as the student figure that out so that the employment goal for a student to go to IPSE may be a broad category,

Sue provided the example of food service and accommodations and you'll see why I'm giving that example in a minute when Sue does her story.

So the work goal can be amended based on the student's interests changing over time and that the clients will still be expected to share with their VR Counselor how things are going and what's going on. Sue and I will be busy trying to figure out what new service category we're going to look at for the four-year programs so that we can help figure out for the Counselor what those third-year and fourth-year opportunities might lend themselves for student participation to really kind of develop more of those measurable skill gains.

>> SUSAN KIZER: Let's talk about the semester-end progress report. It's important for the IPSE Adviser to provide the VR Counselor with documentation of progress at the end of the semesters. An example is documentation regarding appropriate work related conversation, how is the student doing with a rude customer, because sometimes there are rude customers out there or how they're doing greeting new customers. What area needs a little more attention next semester? There's also the issue of showing up on time for appointments. We had one particular student who, a great guy, enjoyed talking to pretty girls. He was very social. He was very appropriate. But he never got to class on time. He never got to his internship on time because he stopped to talk to people. So we started setting timers on his watch so he knew he had to be in the class, or in the internship, at that time. And you want to work on the things that they're going to do when they leave and they're actually in a job. You want to make their life positive.

So here is the scenario of how it would look. Say Luke is an 18-year-old senior. He's in high school and he participated in the Pre-ETS activities, and he recently became a VR client. And one of the discussions during his Pre-ETS session was all about post-secondary options. So he started doing some researching, and he looked at the Kennesaw State University program. That is one program that offers classes in culinary and Luke was interested in the food industry. So Luke informed his Counselor that he was interested in attending the KSU program. He applied, and he was accepted at KSU. And then Luke informed his Counselor he had been accepted. They met several times and created a work plan that focused on food service. Luke also was made aware that the IPSE program would receive \$3,000 for his participation per semester for Pre-ETS instruction for the two-year program with satisfactory performance. Both Luke and his parents met with the Counselor, and they understood the financial support he would receive. So basically it was everybody was on the same page. They had the same work goal, which could be amended at another time, if things changed, but everybody had an understanding of how much support was going to be there,

how much financial support was going to be there, so when Luke came time to go off to KSU in August, everybody understood what was expected, and there was no surprises.

So let's do a recap here. Students interested in attending an IPSE program follow the rehabilitation process. As I said earlier, I did not realize the process took a little bit of time, and we want the students to be able to go through the process. The Counselor and the student meet to create the IPE. They create the work plan. And understand the work plan may be amended as the student progresses through the program. As Christine said, you get into college, you change your mind. That's okay. All new students for Fall 2020 that have Inclusive Post-Secondary Education on their IPE will utilize this new service guideline with a fee of \$3,000 per student per semester. And then CWAT will not occur simultaneously during the IPSE participation for the first two years. Also, if additional employment skills development is identified for additional semesters to reach that employment goal, the Counselors are encouraged to consider the request, and also to review with their supervisor for approval. Let's say the student has gone the first two years, and anyway feel like they need some more time. They need to meet with their Counselor and the Counselor needs to get approval. Each program is required to submit a progress report at the end of each semester. We need to see how things are going. And another important fact is the current participants that are in their 2nd, 3rd and fourth year will adhere to their IPE, they will adhere to their work plan.

>> CHRISTINE FLEMING: So Kate, back to you for –

>> KATE BRADY: Thank you. So you'll see here a link in which you'll be able to submit comments. And the reason that we're doing this is that the mandate of the Statewide Rehabilitation Council, in any state, is to represent the voice and the insights and the needs of the customer base, in other words, people with disabilities seeking employment, to the Vocational Rehabilitation program, in that state. So because this is a policy change, GVRA will be posting this video and an opportunity to submit your comments regarding these changes to the website you see here. I'm going to read it. It's <https://gvs.georgia.gov/submit> <https://gvs.georgia.gov/submit-your-comments> and we hope that you will watch this video and respond carefully regarding your thoughts about the impact of these changes. Thank you.